

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AID-05 ACDA-05 IO-10 EUR-12 /089 W

----- 036538

R 011121Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4132

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2922

BEIRUT ALSO PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IQ, LE, PLO

SUBJ: ELECTION OF NEW NATIONAL BAATH COMMAND (SYRIA)

1. SECRECY TRADITIONALLY SURROUNDING DELIBERATIONS OF NATIONAL COMMAND OF THE BAATH PARTY IN DAMASCUS (BPNC) HAS AGAIN PREVAILED THIS YEAR. AS OF THIS DATE WE KNOW LITTLE BEYOND FACT COMMAND CONGRESS COMMENCED ITS WORK JULY 17 AND WOUND UP ON/ABOUT JULY 30.

2. MOST LOCAL SOURCES AGREE THAT YASIR AL-ASKARI DEPARTED FROM MEMBERSHIP IN THE FORMER COMMAND AND WAS REPLACED AS FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN BY FAWWAZ FAYYAGH WHO RANKED IN FORMER BPNC JUST AFTER AL-ASKARI. BOTH ARE PALESTINIAN.

3. BEIRUT'S AL-NAHAR OF AUGUST 1 ASSERTS FOLLOWING AS FACT:

A. BPNC INCLUDES 17 MEMBERS OF WHICH EIGHT ARE SYRIAN, FOUR PALESTINIAN, FOUR IRAQI AND ONE LEBANESE.

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B. FOURTEEN MEMBERS OF THE FORMER COMMAND WERE RE-ELECTED AND THREE REPLACED. NEW MEMBERS: MAJOR GENERAL NAJI JAMIL (SYRIAN DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER), 'ISSAM AL-QADI (PALESTINIAN) AND AN IRAQI (UNNAMED).

C. CONGRESS ELECTED EIGHT ALTERNATE MEMBERS AND APPOINTED A NEW BPNC "PARTY COURT" COMPOSED OF FIVE MEMBERS. COURT'S MEMBERS INCLUDE THE FIRST WOMAN TO SERVE IN THIS CAPACITY, BUSRA KANAFANI, CURRENTLY PRESIDENT OF THE SYRIAN WOMEN'S FEDERATION.

D. PRIME MINISTER AYYOUBI WAS REELECTED TO THE BPNC. (EMBASSY RECORDS DID NOT CARRY HIM AS FORMER MEMBER. WE HAD BEEN GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THAT AYYOUBI'S ELECTION WAS A PRIME GOAL FOR PRESIDENT ASAD SINCE HE INTENDS KEEP AYYOUBI AS PRIME MINISTER AND, UNDER BAATH PARTY REGULATIONS, PRIME MINISTER MUST BE MEMBER EITHER REGIONAL OR NATIONAL COMMAND OR OF BOTH.)

4. COMMENT: WE ARE AS YET PICKING UP NO RUMORS OF POLICY OR PERSONAL CLASHES WITHIN THE BPNC SUCH AS REPORTEDLY CHARACTERIZED DELIBERATIONS OF REGIONAL COMMAND LAST MARCH/APRIL. IF NAHAR CORRECT IN REPORTING NAJI JAMIL'S ELECTION THIS IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF ASAD'S SUCCESS IN KEEPING HIS MOST TRUSTED LIEUTENANTS IN SENIOR PARTY COUNCILS. ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL JAMIL LOST HIS REGIONAL COMMAND POST LAST SPRING.
MURPHY

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